A Letter of Historic Interest.

An original letter, written seventy-five years ago by Mr. Samuel F. B. Morse, the inventor of the telegraph, is on exhibition in the Children's Museum Library. The letter is framed and is protected from the strong sunlight by a green silk curtain. The writing is perfectly legible, and reads as follows:

New York, April 13, 1838.

HON. F. O. J. SMITH,
DR. SIR,

I have just returned from Morristown and found that Mr. Vail had nearly completed the apparatus and in a very compact and convenient manner for travelling.

Mr. Vail had completed a straight portrule on a plan of his own, which operates exceedingly well, so that for exhibition abroad we shall not need another, and there is not time to construct a circular portrule before we sail. The register acts well. The pen, which is so divided as to make 4 copies of the intelligence at the same moment, is also newly invented; you have a specimen of the first trial of the machinery, below; you have the alphabet, so I shall let you decypher it. * * *

I thank you for the copy of the bill, and am looking with anxiety for the report and the action of Congress upon it. You have doubtless received my letter in answer to yours respecting sailing the 10th of May. Please send anything interesting on the subject of the Telegraph that occurs in the House and believe me as every truly,

Yr. friend & ob. servt

SAM'L F. B. MORSE.

In September, 1837, Prof. Morse invited several friends to see the operation of the telegraph. The exhibition enlisted the interest of Mr. Alfred Vail, who persuaded his father, a wealthy mill owner, to furnish $2,000 to perfect the telegraph and secure a patent. Mr. Vail made many improvements in the apparatus, and devised the famous dot-and-dash alphabet.

The inventor then sought to obtain an appropriation from Congress, in order to build an experimental line between Washington and Baltimore. Funds were not forthcoming, although on February 21, 1838, a successful demonstration was made on a huge coil of wire equal to a circuit of ten miles, in the presence of President Van Buren and his entire Cabinet.

In May, 1838, Mr. Morse went to Europe vainly hoping to secure aid there. After years of discouragement and poverty, on March 3, 1843, Congress appropriated the sum of $30,000 to build the desired telegraph line.